

ANNUAL STATE OF THE COUNTY ADDRESS
Williamson Chamber of Commerce
July 25, 2018

WELCOME AND THANK YOU FOR COMING.

THERE ARE A NUMBER OF ELECTED OFFICIALS JOINING US TODAY AND I WOULD LIKE TO ASK THEM TO STAND AND BE RECOGNIZED FOR THEIR TIME AND SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITIES THEY SERVE.

AT THE RISK OF BEGINNING TODAY'S TALK ON A SOMBER NOTE, I WANT TO TAKE A MOMENT OF SILENCE TO RECOGNIZE THOSE LAW ENFORCEMENT PERSONNEL WHO HAVE BEEN KILLED IN ACTIVE DUTY AROUND OUR NATION, AND CLOSE TO HOME, DURING RECENT MONTHS.

FAR TOO OFTEN, OUR FIRST RESPONDERS HAVE FALLEN VICTIM TO THOSE THEY ARE SWORN TO SERVE AND PROTECT. I WANT OUR LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS TO KNOW THAT THEIR PRESENCE AND THEIR SERVICE ARE NOT TAKEN FOR GRANTED IN WILLIAMSON COUNTY.

IF YOU ARE A MEMBER OF A LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY OR OTHER PUBLIC SAFETY ORGANIZATION, WOULD YOU PLEASE STAND AND LET US RECOGNIZE AND THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE? (APPLAUSE)

AT THIS TIME, I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO PAY TRIBUTE TO OUR OTHER MEN AND WOMEN IN UNIFORM WHO PUT THEMSELVES IN HARMS WAY SERVING IN OUR COUNTRY'S ARMED FORCES. IF YOU ARE A VETERAN, WOULD YOU PLEASE STAND AND BE RECOGNIZED? (APPLAUSE)

I AM PROUD AND HONORED TO HAVE AS MY SPECIAL GUESTS TODAY MAJOR GENERAL, CARL SCHNEIDER, RETIRED AND BRIGADIER GENERAL, KURT WINSTEAD. WOULD YOU ALSO JOIN ME IN SHOWING OUR APPRECIATION TO THESE GENTLEMEN? (APPLAUSE)

THANK YOU.

WHEN HEADLINE NEWS CONSISTS OF TRAGEDIES IN SCHOOLS, ON PATROL, ON DUTY AND OFF DUTY, I AM OFTEN ASKED WHAT ARE WE DOING IN WILLIAMSON COUNTY TO ENSURE THAT THESE INCIDENCES AND TRAGEDIES DO NOT HAPPEN HERE?

WHILE NO COMMUNITY CAN BE IMMUNE AND NO PLAN CAN BE FOOL PROOF, TODAY I WANT TO ASSURE YOU THAT SHERIFF LONG AND THE MEMBERS OF WILLIAMSON COUNTY LAW ENFORCEMENT, PUBLIC SAFETY AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT TEAMS, AS WELL AS NUMEROUS OTHER GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND PRIVATE AGENCIES AND BUSINESSES, CONTINUE TO BE COMMITTED TO SERVE, TRAIN AND GATHER RESOURCES IN AN EFFORT TO BE UNIFIED IN THE EVENT OF A CRISIS.

FUNDING FOR OUR FIRST RESPONDERS HAS BEEN AND CONTINUES TO BE A PRIORITY FOR MEMBERS OF THE WILLIAMSON COUNTY COMMISSION. THEY SHARE YOUR AWARENESS OF THE NEED TO BE AS PREPARED AS POSSIBLE.

SHERIFF LONG OPERATES A FIELD DIVISION, SCHOOL CROSSING GUARDS DIVISION, A DETENTION FACILITY (JAIL) AND A LITTER DIVISION. AS A PART OF THE FIELD DIVISION, THERE IS NOW A FULL-TIME TRAFFIC UNIT INCLUDING 2 MOTORCYCLES AND A SPECIAL OPERATIONS UNIT INCLUDING AVIATION SUPPORT, A SWAT TEAM AND SWIFT WATER RESCUE UNIT.

UP UNTIL FIVE YEARS AGO, THERE WAS NOT MUCH FUNDING IN THE BUDGET FOR SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER POSITIONS IN WILLIAMSON COUNTY. AT THE MARCH, 2013, COUNTY COMMISSION MEETING, 32 SRO POSITIONS WERE FUNDED FOR PLACEMENT IN EVERY WILLIAMSON COUNTY SCHOOL, AS WELL AS THE FRANKLIN SPECIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT. TODAY, THERE ARE 68 OFFICERS IN THE SCHOOL RESOURCE DIVISION – ONE OFFICER IS ASSIGNED TO EVERY WILLIAMSON COUNTY AND FRANKLIN SPECIAL MIDDLE AND ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, AND TWO IN EACH OF THE COUNTY’S HIGH SCHOOLS.

THE 2018-19 SCHOOL RESOURCE DIVISION BUDGET OF 68 OFFICERS AND \$4.2 MILLION REPRESENT 32% OF THE TOTAL 210 SHERIFF’S OFFICE DEPUTIES.

IN JUST THE PAST 7 YEARS, AN ADDITIONAL 103 FULL-TIME AND 9 PART-TIME POSITIONS HAVE BEEN FUNDED FOR THE SHERIFF’S OFFICE. THE OPERATING BUDGET DURING THAT SAME TIME FRAME, HAS INCREASED FROM \$11.5 MILLION TO \$22.1 MILLION IN THE RECENTLY APPROVED BUDGET.

I WANT TO ALSO COMPLIMENT SHERIFF LONG FOR HIS LEADERSHIP ROLE BY AGREEING TO ENGAGE IN A MULTI-STATE LITIGATION ALLEGING THAT THE PHARMACEUTICAL COMPANIES AND DISTRIBUTORS VIOLATED THEIR DUTY UNDER FEDERAL LAW TO MONITOR THE DISTRIBUTION AND CREATED A NUISANCE IN THE PROMOTION OF OPIOID PRODUCTS.

THOUGH MANY MAY THINK WILLIAMSON COUNTY IS IMMUNE TO DRUG ABUSE, THERE WERE 27 OVERDOSE DEATHS IN WILLIAMSON COUNTY IN 2017 FROM PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS, HEROIN AND FENTANYL.

UNDER THE DAY-TO-DAY SUPERVISION OF CAPTAIN MIKE DOBBINS, SHERIFF LONG ALSO OPERATES A 454 BED CRIMINAL JUSTICE CENTER WITH AN ANNUAL OPERATING BUDGET FOR FY2019 AT \$7.8 MILLION.

WHEN IT OPENED IN 1989, THIS FACILITY WAS THE LAST APPROVED BY THE STATE ALLOWING BOTH JUVENILES AND ADULTS TO BE HOUSED UNDER THE SAME ROOF. AS WE FACE THE MANY NEEDS FOR ADDITIONAL SPACE FOR THE OPERATIONS OF THE ADULT JAIL, SEPARATION OF THE ADULT AND JUVENILE POPULATION WILL BE REQUIRED.

THIRTY-SIX MEMBERS OF THE LAW ENFORCEMENT COMMUNITY AND THE PUBLIC RECENTLY COMPLETED AN 18-MONTH "TRIPLE J TASK FORCE" STUDY. ESTABLISHED TO REVIEW THE CURRENT AND PROJECTED NEEDS FOR OUR JUVENILE, JUSTICE AND JAIL OPERATIONS, THIS TASK FORCE STUDIED CURRENT AND PROJECTED CASELOADS FOR OUR SYSTEMS AND LOOKED AT WHAT FACILITIES WILL BE NEEDED AS WE MOVE IN TO THE NEXT 20-25 YEARS.

THESE FINDINGS WILL SOON BE PROVIDED TO A CONSULTANT WHO WILL DEVELOP A MASTER PLAN THAT WILL OUTLINE THESE MUCH NEEDED FACILITIES FOR CONSTRUCTION.

JUVENILE COURT JUDGE, SHARON GUFFEE AND JUVENILE COURT CLERK, BRENDA HYDEN SERVED ON THIS TASK FORCE PROVIDING INFORMATION REGARDING THE INCREASING JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM NEEDS AND HOW IT CONTINUES TO BE IMPACTED BY THE GROWTH IN OUR COUNTY.

LAST YEAR, THAT DEPARTMENT PROCESSED OVER 2,000 OFFENSES, AND 300 CASES INVOLVING CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT. THEY ARE CURRENTLY CAREFULLY MONITORING 111 CHILDREN IN THE CUSTODY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES, MANY OF WHICH ARE IN FOSTER CARE PLACEMENTS.

SPACE FOR OUR JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM IS AN ISSUE AND MUST BE ADDRESSED. THE CURRENT LOCATION IS NOT IDEAL AND JUVENILE HOUSING WILL BE REQUIRED TO BE SEPARATE FROM THE ADULT DETENTION FACILITIES.

DURING THE LAST LEGISLATIVE SESSION, THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AUTHORIZED THE ADDITION OF A 5TH CIRCUIT COURT JUDGE FOR THE 21ST JUDICIAL DISTRICT, WHICH INCLUDES WILLIAMSON COUNTY. WE HAVE BEEN ASKED BY THE CIRCUIT COURT TO ADDRESS COURTROOM NEEDS TO ASSIST IN THE INCREASED COURT CASES AND CROWDED COURTROOMS. THE MASTER PLAN WILL ADDRESS HOW BEST TO UTILIZE EXISTING FACILITIES, INCLUDING THE HISTORIC COURTHOUSE ON THE SQUARE.

AS WE ARE FACING THE CAPITAL AND OPERATIONAL NEEDS FOR EACH OF THESE SERVICES, WE WILL BE SEEKING CONSULTATION AND CONSTRUCTION PROFESSIONALS TO ASSIST IN GETTING THE BEST BUY FOR OUR TAX DOLLARS.

THE COUNTY COMMISSION RECENTLY AUTHORIZED THE FORMATION OF A PUBLIC BUILDING AUTHORITY (PBA) FOR WILLIAMSON COUNTY. THIS 7-MEMBER GROUP WILL UTILIZE THEIR EXPERTISE TO HELP WITH THE BIDDING AND CONSTRUCTION PROCESS NEEDED FOR THESE CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS AND WILL ALLOW THE COUNTY TO SEIZE OPPORTUNITIES FOR SAVINGS.

IT IS NO SECRET THAT WILLIAMSON COUNTY HAS LONG BEEN SOUGHT OUT AS THE LOCATION FOR TOP EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES. THE 2018-19 WILLIAMSON COUNTY SCHOOL'S OPERATING BUDGET REPRESENTS AN INCREASE OF APPROXIMATELY \$12.8 MILLION FROM THE PRIOR FISCAL YEAR'S ADOPTED BUDGET.

COUPLED WITH THE SCHOOL CENTRAL CAFETERIA AND EXTENDED SCHOOL PROGRAMS, NEITHER OF WHICH REQUIRE PROPERTY TAX REVENUES, THE TOTAL \$371 MILLION FOR SCHOOL OPERATIONS CONTINUES TO REPRESENT THE LARGEST PERCENTAGE OF THE COUNTY'S \$568 MILLION BUDGET, AT APPROXIMATELY 65%.

WHEN YOU ADD IN THE FUNDING NEEDED FOR SCHOOL DEBT PROJECTS, THE PERCENTAGE OF THE ANNUAL BUDGET ATTRIBUTED TO SCHOOL NEEDS INCREASES TO \$422,374,893, OR 74.31%. THIS INDICATES THAT THE REMAINDER OF YOUR COUNTY GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS IS FUNDED BY ONLY 25.69% OF THE ANNUAL OPERATING BUDGET.

COMMISSIONERS JUDY HERBERT, BOBBY HULLETT, TODD KAESTNER AND CHAIRMAN PAUL WEBB WERE COMMITTED EARLY IN THE BUDGET REVIEW PROCESS TO ENSURE THAT THERE WAS NOT A PROPERTY TAX INCREASE. EACH

YEAR, IT BECOMES INCREASINGLY MORE DIFFICULT TO BE ABLE TO FUND THE BUDGET AND MEET THE NEEDS WE FACE WITH OUR CONTINUED GROWTH.

PRESENTING A CONSOLIDATED \$568 MILLION BUDGET WITH NO INCREASE IN THE OVERALL PROPERTY TAX RATE REQUIRES ALL OF OUR ELECTED OFFICIALS AND DEPARTMENT HEADS TO PRIORITIZE AND COMPROMISE.

I AM PROUD TO SAY THAT THE COUNTY COMMISSION JUST ADOPTED THE BUDGET COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDED BUDGET WHICH REQUIRES NO INCREASE IN THE COUNTY-WIDE PROPERTY TAX RATE FOR 2018-19. AT \$2.15 PER \$100 OF ASSESSED VALUE, IT CONTINUES TO REFLECT THE LOWEST PROPERTY TAX RATE IN THE MIDDLE-TENNESSEE REGION.

I WANT TO THANK THE BUDGET COMMITTEE, OUR BUDGET DIRECTOR, NENA GRAHAM, THE SCHOOL BOARD, DR. MIKE LOONEY AND HIS BUDGET DIRECTOR, LESLIE HOLMAN FOR WORKING TOGETHER TO HELP MAKE THIS HAPPEN.

WITH THE MAY PRIMARY BEHIND US AND THE AUGUST GENERAL ELECTION FORTHCOMING, THERE WILL BE MANY NEW FACES GOVERNING IN WILLIAMSON COUNTY.

I WANT TO ACKNOWLEDGE AND THANK THE MEMBERS OF THE 2014-18 COUNTY COMMISSION FOR THEIR SERVICE. TOGETHER, WE HAVE GREIVED THE RECENT LOSSES OF COMMISSIONERS TOM BAIN, LEW GREEN AND MOST RECENTLY, THE COMMISSION'S CHAIRMAN, JACK WALTON.

EACH OF THESE MEN FOUGHT HARD BATTLES WITH THEIR ILLNESSES AND CONTINUED TO SERVE THEIR DISTRICTS AS BEST THEIR HEALTH WOULD ALLOW.

LIKEWISE, THIS COMMUNITY ALSO SHARED THE LOSS OF FORMER SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER AND FORMER COUNTY COMMISSIONER, HOUSTON NARON. DURING HIS 30 YEAR TENURE AS AN ELECTED OFFICIAL, HE SERVED AS CHAIRMAN OF BOTH OF THESE BODIES.

AS FAMILIES GROW AND OTHERS MOVE IN TO THIS COUNTY, OFTEN TIMES THE HOUSEHOLD INCLUDES THE ADDITION OF A FAMILY PET. UNFORTUNATELY, FOR VARIOUS REASONS, THOSE SAME PETS OFTEN FIND THEIR WAY TO OUR ANIMAL CARE FACILITY AND BECOME THE NEWEST ADDITION TO THE COUNTY'S FAMILY AND MUST BE CARED FOR BY DIRECTOR, ONDREA JOHNSON AND HER STAFF.

CONSTRUCTED IN THE MID-1990s, THE CURRENT FACILITY HAS BEEN RENOVATED AND RESTRUCTURED TO ITS LIMITS. OUR CURRENT LOCATION IS PARTIALLY LOCATED IN THE FLOOD PLAIN AND DOES NOT INCLUDE ROOM TO GROW.

THOUGH OUR STATISTICS SHOW WE CURRENTLY AVERAGE A SAVE RATE OF 97%, THERE IS AN ON-GOING NEED TO STRESS THE IMPORTANCE OF SPAYING AND NEUTERING OUR FAMILY PETS.

DURING THE MONTH OF JUNE ALONE, OUR SHELTER TOOK IN OVER 300 CATS AND KITTENS AND MAXED OUT OUR CAPACITY TO HOUSE ANY MORE. THIS CAUSED THE SHELTER TO IMPLEMENT A "DEFERRED INTAKE" POLICY UNTIL WE COULD GET THE MAJORITY OF THEM ADOPTED.

INSTANCES SUCH AS THIS CAN BE AVOIDED BY BEING A RESPONSIBLE PET OWNER. (PAUSE FOR SLIDE)

THE COUNTY HAS PURCHASED PROPERTY ON OLD CHARLOTTE PIKE, NEAR THE INTERSECTION OF DEL RIO PIKE AND CARLISLE LANE, WHERE WE PLAN TO BREAK GROUND ON A NEW ANIMAL CARE FACILITY NEXT SPRING. DURING THE PAST YEAR, THERE HAS BEEN A TASK FORCE IN PLACE TO LOOK AT NEW FACILITY MODELS AND STUDYING BEST PRACTICES FOR OPERATING AN ANIMAL CARE FACILITY THAT WE CAN UTILIZE IN PLANNING FOR THIS NEW FACILITY.

WE ARE FORTUNATE TO HAVE THE MUCH NEEDED SUPPORT OF "FRIENDS OF ANIMAL CONTROL", MARS CORPORATION, HUNDREDS OF VOLUNTEERS AND OTHER BUSINESSES AND INDIVIDUALS WHO ASSIST THE COUNTY IN OUR FUNDING, SERVICES AND STAFFING NEEDS IN CARING FOR THESE ANIMALS.

AS THIS CONSTRUCTION PROJECT ADVANCES, WE ANTICIPATE THAT IT WILL BE THE FIRST TO UTILIZE THE NEW PUBLIC BUILDING AUTHORITY AS A RESOURCE FOR CONSTRUCTION SAVINGS. WE HOPE TO BE ABLE TO SHARE NEWS ABOUT THE GRAND OPENING IN APROXIMATELY 18-24 MONTHS.

THE COUNTY'S PUBLIC LIBRARY RECENTLY RECEIVED A FACE-LIFT WITH THE ADDITION OF A NEW LEARNING CENTER. THE LEARNING CENTER FEATURES, DESK TOP AND LAP TOP COMPUTERS, STANDING DESKS AND MOBILE FURNITURE! LOCATED IN A COZY ENVIRONMENT, VISITORS CAN UTILIZE THE LEARNING LAB FOR SMALL GROUP WORK AND INDIVIDUAL WORK SPACES. LAPTOPS ARE AVAILABLE AT THE REFERENCE DESK AND CAN BE CHECKED OUT FOR YOUR USE AT THE FACILITY IF YOU DON'T HAVE ONE OF YOUR OWN.

UNDER THE OVERSIGHT OF DIRECTOR, KEVIN BENSON, WILLIAMSON COUNTY'S PROPERTY MANAGEMENT STAFF OVERSEES THE MAINTENANCE OF 106 FACILITIES THROUGHOUT THE COUNTY. THESE FACILITIES INCLUDE NOT ONLY THE BUILDINGS WHICH HOUSE OUR GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS BUT ALSO THE JAIL, JUDICIAL CENTER, PUBLIC SAFETY CENTER, THE COMMUNITY BRANCH LIBRARIES, CONVENIENCE CENTERS, VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENTS AND COMMUNITY RECREATION CENTERS. IN THE LAST FISCAL YEAR, APPROXIMATELY \$6.6 MILLION WAS SPENT ON FACILITY MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENTS ON THOSE BUILDINGS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTY.

WILLIAMSON COUNTY CURRENTLY HAS APPROXIMATELY 150,000 REGISTERED VOTERS WITH AN ELECTION COMMISSION STAFF OF SIX FULL-TIME PERSONNEL. LIKE SO MANY OF OUR COUNTY OPERATIONS, THEY ARE IN NEED OF ADDITIONAL SPACE SO THAT THEY MAY PLAN FOR FUTURE GROWTH, AS WELL.

TODAY, WE HAVE A "FUTURE VOTER" AS ONE OF OUR SPECIAL GUESTS IN THE AUDIENCE. YOU MAY RECOGNIZE HER AS "ROSIE THE RIVETOR" BUT SHE IS KNOWN BY HER FAMILY AS ROSE ELAINE EGBERT AND IS HERE WITH HER MOM, VIRGINIA.

IN AN EFFORT TO PROVIDE THEM WITH THE OPERATING SPACE THEY NEED, THE ELECTION COMMISSION IS SCHEDULED TO RELOCATE FROM THE ADMINISTRATIVE COMPLEX TO A NEW LOCATION ON DOWNS BOULEVARD IN THE NEXT 18-24 MONTHS. FORMERLY THE LOJAC OFFICE BUILDING, THE COUNTY IS IN THE PROCESS OF ACQUIRING THAT BUILDING WE CURRENTLY LEASE. THIS BUILDING WILL PROVIDE OFFICE SPACE AND STORAGE TO CONSOLIDATE THE ELECTION COMMISSION'S OPERATIONS AND PROVIDE THEM WITH GOOD VISIBILITY AND EASY ACCESS FOR OUR VOTERS.

WILLIAMSON COUNTY CONTINUES TO GROW AND PROSPER IN SO MANY HEALTHY WAYS, NOT JUST PHYSICALLY – THOUGH WE ARE RANKED AS THE #1 HEALTHIEST COUNTY IN TENNESSEE AND 25th IN THE NATION - BUT ALSO HEALTHY IN THE SENSE OF MAINTAINING A BALANCE IN THE GROWTH THAT IS OCCURRING.

THOUGH WE CAN ALL AGREE THERE ARE VARYING OPINIONS ON GROWTH AND HOW IT AFFECTS OUR DAY-TO-DAY LIVES, IT IS MY BELIEF THAT WE CONTINUE TO ENJOY A VIABLE, ECONOMIC COMMUNITY IN WHICH TO LIVE, WORK, WORSHIP AND RAISE OUR FAMILIES.

THE LATEST COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT ASSESSED VALUE INFORMATION FROM PROPERTY ASSESSOR, BRAD COLEMAN INDICATES THAT OUR 2018 COMMERCIAL INVENTORY TOTALS 3,254 PARCELS AT A TOTAL VALUE OF OVER \$9 BILLION. THESE PARCELS CONSISTS OF GENERAL COMMERCIAL, INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL CONDOS, HOTELS, APARTMENTS AND OFFICE BUILDINGS.

SINCE 2010, OVER THE PAST EIGHT YEARS, THE PERCENTAGE OF COMMERCIAL PARCELS HAS INCREASED ONLY 4.4% (FROM 3,116 TO 3,254) WHILE THE VALUE OF THAT COMMERCIAL GROWTH HAS INCREASED AT 93.8% (FROM \$4.6 BILLION TO \$9 BILLION).

AS YOU KNOW, COMMERCIAL GROWTH FOLLOWS ROOF TOPS. DURING THAT SAME TIME FRAME, COUNTY-WIDE RESIDENTIAL PARCELS HAVE INCREASED BY 18.4% AND THE VALUE OF THESE PARCELS HAS INCREASED BY 67%.

THE TOTAL COUNTY-WIDE APPRAISED VALUE, REAL AND PERSONAL PROPERTY, RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL, INCLUDING MUNICIPALITIES, EXCEEDS \$45.3 BILLION (\$45,303,103,850).

I CONSIDER THIS TO BE HEALTHY GROWTH FOR OUR GREAT COUNTY.

IN COMPARISON, HAMILTON COUNTY'S MOST RECENT REPORT HAS A TOTAL APPRAISED VALUE OF \$ \$33.8 BILLION.

IN A RECENT ARTICLE PUBLISHED IN THE TENNESSEAN, WILLIAMSON COUNTY WAS CITED AS BEING THE FASTEST GROWING COUNTY IN THE STATE DURING THE PAST SEVEN YEARS, WITH A POPULATION INCREASE OF 22.9%, IN COMPARISON TO THE STATE INCREASE OF 5.7%. OF THE 42,127 NEW COUNTY RESIDENTS DURING THAT TIME PERIOD, 35,034 WERE REPORTED TO HAVE MIGRATED TO WILLIAMSON COUNTY.

WITH OUR 2017 UNEMPLOYMENT RATE OF 2.7%, IN COMPARISON TO 3.7% FOR THE STATE, I BELIEVE MANY PEOPLE ARE MOVING HERE DUE TO OUR JOB GROWTH THAT COMES WITH OUR OUTSTANDING BUSINESSES. WE ALSO CONTINUE TO SEE AN INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF RETIREES WHO ARE MOVING HERE TO BE WITH THEIR CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN.

SMART ASSET, AN ONLINE PERSONAL FINANCE TOOL, COMPILED NUMBERS FROM THE U. S. CENSUS BUREAU AND THE U. S. BUREAU OF ECONOMIC ANALYSIS WITH THEIR LATEST NUMBERS AVAILABLE FROM 2016.

THEIR REPORT INDICATES THAT INVESTMENT IN WILLIAMSON COUNTY SOARED BEYOND THE REST OF THE STATE, LANDING US IN THE TOP 10 COUNTIES IN THE NATION ISSUING THE HIGHEST NUMBER OF NEW BUILDING PERMITS.

WILLIAMSON COUNTY IS PART OF AN AREA KNOWN AS THE CUMBERLAND REGION OF TENNESSEE. OF THESE TEN COUNTIES WITHIN THIS REGION, THERE STILL EXISTS ENVIRONMENTAL TREASURES WORTH BILLIONS OF DOLLARS.

THIS TEN COUNTY REGION HAS OVER THREE MILLION ACRES OF FARMS AND NATURAL LANDS, WITH ONLY 15% OF IT BEING PROTECTED IN ANY WAY.

TODAY, I AM EXCITED TO ANNOUNCE THAT WILLIAMSON COUNTY HAS THE OPPORTUNITY TO HELP PRESERVE OVER 245 ACRES IN THE SOUTH EAST AREA OF THE COUNTY. IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE LAND TRUST OF TENNESSEE AND THE OGILVIE FAMILY, WE HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO ADD THIS BEAUTIFUL ACREAGE TO OUR COUNTY'S PARKS SYSTEM.

MR. AND MRS. WALT OGILVIE PREVIOUSLY OWNED AND OPERATED A BED AND BREAKFAST, KNOWN AS "PEACOCK HILL" IN THE COLLEGE GROVE COMMUNITY. ORIGINALLY PURCHASED IN 1953, THE FAMILY HAS BEGUN WORKING THROUGH THE SETTLEMENT OF THEIR PRIVATE ESTATE AND IT HAS BECOME INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT TO THEM TO HAVE THEIR TREASURED AND SCENIC PROPERTY RETAIN ITS IDENTITY AS GREENSPACE IN WILLIAMSON COUNTY.

THE OGILVIE FAMILY HAS EXPRESSED THEIR DESIRE TO DONATE 245 ACRES TO WILLIAMSON COUNTY TO BE USED AS A PASSIVE PARK WHICH WILL BECOME KNOWN AS "PEACOCK HILL NATURE PARK".

IN COLLABORATION WITH THE OGILVIE FAMILY WISHES AND THE LAND TRUST, THIS PASSIVE PARK WILL BE DEVELOPED OVER TIME TO INCLUDE TRAILS FOR HIKING, WALKING AND BIKING, PICNICING, HORSEBACK RIDING, CATCH AND RELEASE FISHING AND VARIOUS FAMILY OUTINGS. FUTURE DEVELOPMENT WILL PROVIDE A SOLAR POWERED PARK OFFICE, SIMILAR TO THE ONE AT TIMBERLAND PARK ON THE WEST SIDE OF THE COUNTY.

PLEASE JOIN ME IN THANKING THE OGILVIE FAMILY FOR THIS WONDERFUL DONATION. (APPLAUSE)

WILLIAMSON COUNTY CONTINUES TO GAIN NOTARIETY FOR A VARIETY OF REASONS - ONE OF MY FAVORITES WAS ALSO RECENTLY ACKNOWLEDGED BY SMART ASSETS WHEN THEY NAMED WILLIAMSON COUNTY AS THE FIFTH HAPPIEST PLACE IN AMERICA!

OF THE 980 COUNTIES THEY ANALYZED, WILLIAMSON COUNTY HAD THE HIGHEST INCOME TO COST OF LIVING RATIO.

AS WE LOOK AT WHAT MAKES US SO HAPPY, WE HAVE TO THINK ABOUT SOME OF THE THINGS WE MAY TAKE FOR GRANTED:

- GREAT SCHOOL SYSTEM WITH OUR PUBLIC EDUCATION STUDENTS QUALIFYING FOR OVER \$1 BILLION IN SCHOLARSHIPS SINCE 2010.
- EXCELLENT LAW ENFORCEMENT ENSURING LOW CRIME RATES
- AWARD WINNING PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES
- OUR ASSESSED PROPERTY VALUES CONTINUE TO HOLD THEIR OWN AND/OR PROSPER. IN JUNE, 2018, THE AVERAGE PRICE OF NEW HOMES IN WILLIAMSON COUNTY WAS \$546,166.

BY COMPARISON, OUR NEIGHBORS TO THE EAST IN RUTHERFORD COUNTY AVERAGED \$293,308; MAURY COUNTY TO THE SOUTH WAS \$248,260; AND DAVIDSON COUNTY TO THE NORTH WAS \$376,373.

- TOURISM SPENDING IN WILLIAMSON COUNTY CONTINUES TO RANK AT 6TH OVERALL IN THE STATE. IN 2016, THE LATEST INFORMATION AVAILABLE FROM THE STATE, \$427.25 MILLION IN TOURISM DOLLARS WAS SPENT IN WILLIAMSON COUNTY.

TOURISM AND TRAVEL RESEARCH CONSULTANTS, D. K. SHIFLETT & ASSOCIATES, RECENTLY RELEASED TRAVEL INFORMATION WHICH CONCLUDED THAT WILLIAMSON COUNTY WAS HOME TO 1.51 MILLION VISITORS IN 2017!!

THIS NUMBER REPRESENTS AN INCREASE OF 6% IN WILLIAMSON COUNTY TOURISM IN COMPARISON TO THE NATIONAL AVERAGE INCREASE OF 2.6 PERCENT.

- I COULD NOT BE ANY HAPPIER, OR PROUD, THAT WILLIAMSON COUNTY'S FINANCES ARE STRONG AND THAT WE CONTINUE TO BENEFIT FROM A MOODY'S "AAA" BOND RATING. THE BOND RATING IS BASICALLY A "CREDIT SCORE" FOR OUR COUNTY.

IT REFLECTS A COMPLETELY INDEPENDENT ASSESSMENT OF OUR FINANCIAL STRENGTH, FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND PROSPECTS FOR THE FUTURE. BY HAVING THE HIGHEST RATING POSSIBLE, WE ARE ABLE TO FINANCE PROJECTS AT LOWER BORROWING RATES WHICH CAN RESULT IN SUBSTANTIAL SAVINGS FOR THE TAXPAYERS.

OUR RATING IS REEVALUATED BY THE RATING AGENCY EACH TIME WE ISSUE NEW BONDS. OUR "AAA" RATING HAS BEEN REAFFIRMED EVERY YEAR SINCE IT WAS FIRST AWARDED IN 2008.

THE RATING AGENCY CONTINUES TO MONITOR OUR CURRENT AND FUTURE DEBT PROFILE IN RELATION TO THE SIZE OF OUR TAX BASE, THE STRENGTH OF OUR HOUSING MARKET, THE GROWTH IN OUR ECONOMY, THE QUALITY OF OUR LABOR MARKET AND THE FINANCIAL HEALTH OF OUR POPULATION.

- OUR INCOME PER CAPITA AND MEDIAN HOME VALUES CONTINUE TO RANK US AT THE TOP OF ALL COUNTIES IN THE STATE. THE COUNTY'S FINANCIAL RESOURCES AND FINANCIAL CONDITION CONTINUE TO MAKE IT POSSIBLE TO SUPPORT THE CAPITAL NEEDS THAT COME WITH A GROWING POPULATION.

I WOULD BE REMISS IF I DIDN'T ALSO TALK ABOUT OUR ACCESS TO QUALITY HEALTH CARE IN WILLIAMSON COUNTY. WILLIAMSON MEDICAL CENTER CONTINUES TO STAND OUT AMONG ITS PEERS BY PROVIDING TOP RATED FACILITIES, PHYSICIANS, EQUIPMENT AND STAFFING AND EXCELLENT LEADERSHIP.

AS MANY OF YOU MAY BE AWARE, WILLIAMSON MEDICAL CENTER, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH SOME OF THE AREA'S LEADING AND RENOWNED ORTHOPAEDIC SURGEONS, RECENTLY CREATED THE BONE & JOINT INSTITUTE OF TENNESSEE. A NEW FACILITY IS CURRENTLY UNDER CONSTRUCTION ADJACENT TO WILLIAMSON MEDICAL AND, WHEN COMPLETED, WILL SERVE AS A DESTINATION FOR PATIENTS NEEDING STATE-OF-THE ART ORTHOPAEDIC

SERVICES FROM BOARD CERTIFIED SURGEONS WHO ARE DEDICATED TO PROVIDING COMPASSIONATE, PATIENT-CENTRIC CARE.

SIMULTANEOUSLY, WILLIAMSON MEDICAL CENTER IS EXPANDING ITS WOMENS SERVICES FACILITIES WHICH WILL INCLUDE 14 NEW LABOR AND DELIVERY ROOMS, 8 ADDITIONAL NEONATAL INTENSIVE CARE (NICU) BEDS, THE RELOCATION OF THE WELL BABY NURSERY AND ONE NEW C-SECTION ROOM.

SINCE ITS BEGINNINGS IN 1957, YOUR LOCALLY-OWNED HOSPITAL HAS BEEN FOCUSED ON PROVIDING TOP NOTCH MEDICAL CARE TO OUR RESIDENTS. THESE ADDITIONS AND IMPROVEMENTS WILL CARRY ON THAT TRADITION.

THERE ARE NUMEROUS NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS THROUGHOUT OUR COUNTY WHO WORK TO PROVIDE SERVICES AND FUNDING TO THOSE FAMILIES AND INDIVIDUALS WHO NEED A HAND UP IN THEIR PERSONAL LIVES. THESE ORGANIZATIONS AND THEIR RESPECTIVE BOARDS, DONORS AND VOLUNTEERS ALSO CONTRIBUTE TO OUR COMMUNITY IN WAYS MANY OF US CAN ONLY IMAGINE.

FROM THE OUTSIDE LOOKING IN, WILLIAMSON COUNTY IS OFTEN THOUGHT TO NOT HAVE ANY PROBLEMS. IN FACT, THE OPPOSITE IS TRUE. HOWEVER, WE ARE VERY FORTUNATE TO HAVE THESE ORGANIZATIONS AND THEIR SUPPORTERS WHO DO SO MUCH TO SERVE OUR RESIDENTS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTY.

ONE NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION I'M PARTICULARLY FOND OF IS THE WILLIAMSON COUNTY FAIR. NOW IN ITS 14TH YEAR, THE FAIR WILL OPEN WITH A RIBBON CUTTING AT 5:30 PM ON AUGUST 3RD. OUR "COUNTRY PRIDE, COUNTY WIDE" CONTINUES TO BE THE LARGEST FAMILY-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY EVENTS IN WILLIAMSON COUNTY.

HOWEVER, THERE IS NO MAGIC CARPET THAT UNROLLS AND THE FAIR APPEARS.

IT TAKES YEAR-ROUND PLANNING TO MAKE "NINE DAYS OF FUN BEGIN THE FIRST FRIDAY IN AUGUST". IF YOU ARE CURRENTLY A SPONSOR OR VOLUNTEER OF THE FAIR, WE APPRECIATE YOU! IF YOU ARE CONSIDERING BEING A SPONSOR OR VOLUNTEERING, PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE – WILLIAMSON COUNTY FAIR.ORG AND REVIEW THE EXCITEMENT PLANNED FOR THIS YEAR.

OUR 2000+ VOUNTEERS ARE THE BACKBONE OF THIS FAIR..... AND THE ARM BONE.... AND THE LEG BONE.... AND THE FUNNY BONE. (PAUSE)

WE WANT TO EXTEND AN OFFER FOR YOU TO BECOME INVOLVED AND BRING YOUR BAG OF BONES TO BECOME AN ACTIVE VOLUNTEER! MARK YOUR CALENDARS AND MAKE PLANS TO VISIT THE FAIR AND ENJOY THE SIGHTS, THE SOUNDS, THE RIDES AND THE FAMILY TIME IT OFFERS, AUGUST 3RD THROUGH THE 11TH.

DUE TO TIME CONSTRAINTS, I HAVE ONLY SKIMMED THE SURFACE REGARDING WHY WILLIAMSON COUNTY IS A HAPPY AND GROWING COMMUNITY. THERE ARE SO MANY PEOPLE WHO WORK IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT EACH DAY TO ENSURE WE CONTINUE TO ENJOY THIS WONDERFUL QUALITY OF LIFE IN WILLIAMSON COUNTY.

I AM VERY BLESSED AND HUMBLY HONORED TO HAVE RECEIVED THE MAJORITY VOTES TO RETURN AS YOUR MAYOR OF THIS GREAT COUNTY IN THE MAY PRIMARY. IT IS NOT A VOTE THAT I TAKE LIGHTLY; IT IS A PRIVILEGE.

THOUGH I HAVE SHARED A LITTLE BIT TODAY OF WHY I FEEL WILLIAMSON COUNTY IS "AMERICA'S GREATEST COUNTY", KEEPING THAT MOMENTUM GOING IS NOT EASY. I APPRECIATE YOUR VOTE OF CONFIDENCE IN ME TO CONTINUE TO SERVE IN THIS CAPACITY.

I ENJOY MEETING WITH YOU ALL, I ENJOY ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES WE FACE IN AND I ENJOY WORKING ON YOUR BEHALF TO CONTINUE TO PROVIDE A GREAT COUNTY IN WHICH TO WORK, WORSHIP, PLAY AND RAISE OUR FAMILIES.

MAY GOD CONTINUE TO BLESS THIS NATION AND OUR FREEDOMS, OUR STATE AND AMERICA'S GREATEST, WILLIAMSON COUNTY.